



## Governors say a clean energy answer is blowing in the wind

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The governors of Virginia, Maryland and Delaware have announced a partnership designed to promote and coordinate the development of wind energy off the mid-Atlantic coast.

Officials in the three states said that by working together, they hope to advance the construction of power lines and advocate jointly for federal legislation that would help pave the way for what many expect will become a critical source of electricity for coastal communities.

In a joint statement last week, the three governors said offshore wind energy would help meet the region's electricity needs while doing the least harm to the environment. They also highlighted its potential to create jobs. In Virginia, officials estimate, construction of wind farms offshore and on land would create more than 3,000 jobs over the next two decades.

"With our extensive coastline and highly educated workforce, Virginia is particularly well suited to explore offshore wind energy opportunities," Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine (D) said in the statement. "In these tough economic times, it's more important than ever that we invest in renewable energy sources that will create jobs and provide cleaner, more affordable energy for our families and communities."

Although the United States has many wind farms, none has been built off the coast, where, advocates say, winds are generally stronger and steadier, but rough weather and salt water present challenges. Wind farm proposals have also encountered resistance from those concerned about the large steel turbines' impact on wildlife and vistas.

Environmental activists say the development of cleaner energy sources is crucial if the nation is to reduce its contribution to climate change.

"That whole continental shelf that runs along the coasts of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia represents a continuous energy resource that is best developed in unison rather than piecemeal," said Mike Tidwell of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, which praised the partnership.

In Delaware, a power company has proposed erecting a cluster of turbines about 13 miles out to sea from Rehoboth Beach in what state officials hope would become the nation's first offshore wind farm. Officials in charge of the project say the turbines would be barely visible from the coast on a clear day.

In September, the Maryland Energy Administration announced an initiative aimed at examining its 31 miles of coastline for wind energy potential. At the time, state energy chief Malcolm Woolf said offshore wind had the potential to provide more renewable energy than any other resource in the region. Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) said pooling resources and coordinating efforts with Virginia and Delaware would help promote the state's goal of relying on cleaner sources of electricity.

"Today marks another important step towards a clean energy future for our families and workers," O'Malley said in the Nov. 10 statement with Kaine and Delaware Gov. Jack Markell (D).

Virginia officials have also taken steps to develop the state's offshore wind capacity, lobbying the federal government in the hope of persuading private companies to develop projects in federal waters off Hampton Roads.

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